

12

- Ma° dame a la Chalandre comparer
Porrai, la quelle en droit° de sa nature
Desdeigne l'omme a tiel point regarder
Qant il serra de mort en aventure.
5 Et c'est le pis des griefs mals qe j'endure.
Vo tresgent corps, ma dame, qant jeo voie
Et le favour de vo regard procure,
Danger ses oels destorne en autre voie.
- Helas, qant pour le coer trestout entier,
10 Qe j'ai doné sanz point de forsfaiture,°
Ne me deignetz en tant reguerdoner
Q'avoir porrai la soule regardure
De vous, q'avetz et l'oill et la feture
Dont jeo languis; car si° jeo me convoie
15 Par devant vous, qant jeo me plus assure,
Danger ses oels destorne en autre voie.
- Si tresbeals oels sanz merci pour mirer
N'acorde pas, ma dame, a vo mesure.
De vo regard hostetz pourceo danger.
20 Prenetz pité de vostre creature.
Moustretz° moi l'oill de grace en sa figure,
Douls, vair, riant, et plein de toute joie,
Car jesq'en cy, ou si jeo chante ou plure,
Danger ses oels destorne en autre voie.
- 25 En toute humilité, sanz mesprisure,
Jeo me compleigns, ensi come faire doie,
Q'a moi, qui sui del tout soubtz vostre cure,
Danger ses oels destorne en autre voie.

1 The scribe's lower-case m beneath the initial letter is still visible (and especially clear in the photograph), but the decorator instead provided an L.

2 en droit. See the note in the commentary.

10 Cross drawn in margin. All but the first two letters of forsfaiture appear to be in a later hand.

14 si Mac ce

21 Mac Monstrez. See the note in the commentary.

12

- I could compare my lady to the calandra,^o
which, in accordance with its nature,
disdains to look at a man at the point
when he is at risk of death.^o
- 5 And this is the worst of the grievous pains that I endure.
My lady, when I see your gracious self^o
and seek^o the favor of your regard,^o
Danger^o turns its eyes another way.
- ^oAlas, when in exchange for my entire heart,
10 which I have given without any compulsion,^o
you do not deign to reward me so much
that I might have only a look
from you, who have both the eye and the form^o
for which I languish; for if I set myself^o
- 15 before you, when I am most confident,
Danger turns its eyes another way.
- ^oFor^o eyes so beautiful to look^o without mercy
does not agree, my lady, with your character.^o
Therefore remove disdain^o from your look.
- 20 Take pity on your creature.
Show^o me the eye of grace in its visible form,^o
sweet, bright, laughing,^o and full of every joy.
For until now, whether I sing or weep,
Danger turns its eyes another way.
- 25 In all humility, without impropriety,^o
I make my complaint, just as I must do,
that^o for me, who am entirely under your care,
Danger turns its eyes another way.

This is the first of a group of ballades that begin with a comparison or simile, and it weaves together fairly seamlessly the image of the calandra with common motifs drawn from earlier lyrics: the personification of Danger, the wish for the lady's kind regard, the persona's claim that he receives less than he deserves, and his request for mercy or pity. The persona in **11** expresses a similar wish, but he also makes a large concession to reality. In **12**, more typically of poems that attribute the lady's rejection to a personified Danger, her right and her ability to

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make her own choice are effectively effaced, and the persona imagines that he is entitled to a kind response simply because he has set his heart upon the woman that he addresses.

There is some awkwardness in the introduction of Danger in the refrain, since it is now Danger rather than the lady that is being likened to the calandra, as the one who turns away, which might not be such a bad thing if it means overlooking the lover's impertinence. In its classic appearance in *RR*, it is when Danger is attentive that one has to be most concerned. The whole image might make quite a bit more sense if the refrain referred to "vos oels [your eyes]" rather than "ses oels [its eyes]," since each of the three stanzas is in some way about the lady's eyes or the lady's glance, and preventing the lady's friendly glance is one of the roles that Amans imagines for Danger in Book 5 of *CA* (see the note to line 8 below). The awkwardness is particularly visible in lines 16-18, in which Danger's eyes and the lady's eyes appear to be the same. Alternatively, might the refrain be a relic of any earlier version of the poem entirely in the third person, in which the "ses" referred to the lady instead?: "Danger turns *her* eyes another way." I have translated the line as it stands; Yeager silently emends to "your eyes" in his translation.

- 1 "Perhaps the author wrote 'Ma,'" Macaulay speculates, "but the scribe (or rather the illuminator) gives 'La.'" In fact, beneath the decorated "L" that heads the first stanza one can clearly see a cursive *m* with which the scribe has left instruction for the decorator on which letter to supply, an instruction that he evidently overlooked or ignored.
calandra. The calandra (Modern French "calandre") is a type of lark. In *MO* 10705-14 Gower refers again to its habit of turning away from a person who is dying, and he adds that it flies high into the sky at night. Both characteristics are also included in an early fourteenth-century French bestiary cited by *DMF* s.v. "calandrion." Even closer to Gower, the narrator in Machaut's *Dit dou lyon* compares his lady to a "calendre" in lines 44-66, explaining that he is sure that he will be cured of the pain that he suffers from love when his lady looks upon him and sure that he will die when she turns away. Yeager (pp. 136-37) argues that Gower had in mind instead the plover (Latin "charadrius"), citing a passage from the *Physiologus* describing this bird's habit of turning away from the dying, but in *CA* 6.943, Gower cites the plover instead as a bird that lives only on air rather than any more substantial food. Since in none of these passages is Gower describing a feature that he could have observed in nature, it is perhaps best not to worry too much about which of these birds he might actually have seen in England.
- 2 *en droit*. The spacing is not unambiguous, but here and at 25.6, 35.10, 35.17, and 50.26 the scribe appears to have written "en droit" (two words), while at 20.23 he writes "endroit," as also in 43.7, and 49.16 where "endroit" is a noun. "Endroit" is the spelling of the nearly 150 occurrences of the word in Macaulay's edition of *MO* with the sole exception of line 16281, and "endroit (de)" is a common expression meaning "with regard to," and is so listed in *AND* s.v. "endreit" and *DMF* s.v. "endroit," II.B.1, but I have preserved the manuscript spacing rather than regularizing it.
- 4 Cf. Machaut, *Lou*. 229.7-8: "Et si me voy de mort en aventure, / Se Dieus et vous ne me prenez en cure [And thus I see myself in danger of death if God and you do not take me under your care]."
- 6 *self*. This is not an unusual use of "corps," and it carries no sensual connotation. See *DMF* s.v. "corps," I.C.2.a, with numerous citations illustrating the use of "corps" in phrases where in English we would simply say "in person."
- 7 *seek*. For "procurer," Macaulay in his glossary (1:541) gives "bring about, obtain," certainly the more common meaning (see *AND* and *DMF* s.v. "procurer"), but clearly not consistent with the persona's complaint in the rest of the poem. Less commonly does it mean "seek, request," cf. these

lines from Christine de Pizan, *100BD* 25.4-5, "jamais jour ne sera procurée / Chose par moy, dont aiez desplaisir [never will be sought by me anything with which you are displeased]," cited in *DMF*, loc.cit., A.2.a, "'Mettre ses efforts, ses soins à qqc. [put one's efforts towards, to care for something]." See also *MED* s.v. "pröcüren," 2(c), "to seek to obtain (sth.)," with one citation from Trevisa's translation of Higden's *Polychronicon* ("a1387"), but no other from before 1450.

regard. "Regard" is literally a look or glance. The wish for a sweet look from the lady (the "Douz Regart" of *RR* 906 ff.) and its beneficial effect upon her admirer is a common theme of 14th-century poetry, with examples far too numerous to count. See, for one, the passage from Machaut's *Dit dou lyon* cited in the note to line 1, above; also *Lou*. 179.R, *T&C* 3.129-30; and in *50B*, 19.13-14 and 33.R. Cf. also Gower's adaptation of this motif in his address to the Virgin in *MO* 28588-91:

Je te pry, dame, toutes voies
Par ta pité que tu me voies;
Car s'ensi fais, je guariray
Des griefs pecchés dont languai ay.

("I pray you, lady, constantly, that you see me out of your pity, for if you do so, I will be healed of the grievous sins for which I have languished.")

- 8 "Danger" is the most prominent of the guardians of the rose in *RR*. It occurs very commonly throughout 14th-century lyric to represent the qualities of the woman's character that the male persona imagines are the obstacles to his immediate acceptance as a lover, and it might be translated, depending upon circumstance, as "reserve," "reluctance," "standoffishness," or "disdain" (as I have rendered it in line 19). Amans imagines Danger as his lady's guardian in *CA* 5.6617 ff.; one consequence of its vigilance, as in this poem, is that "The leste lokinge of hire yhe / Mai noght be stole, if he it syhe" (5.6625-26).

Gower personifies Danger here, in 23.10, and in 30.15, 18, and 23. It appears as an aspect of character or behavior, without personification, in 30.4, 33.13, and 34.21; and it seems to float between the two in 26.26, 37.20, and in line 19 below. In his shorter poems, Machaut fully personifies Danger only in his Motets, 2.9, 4.20, and 10.15, but the personification is quite common among later poets, particularly in Granson. In his ballades, Machaut usually uses "dangier" in a sense closer to its ultimate etymological root in Latin "dominus [lord]," as in *Lou*. 14.18, "Vueil vivre adès en amouereus dangier [I wish always to live under the power of love]." Gower may use the word in this sense in 30.12. For a third sense of "danger," closer to its meaning in Modern English, see 30.R and the commentary on ballade 30 below; and for use in a different context, see 34.21.

- 9-13 Gower combines two commonplace motifs here (and in 17.9-13, 28.5-6 and 15-20), the lover's gift of his heart and his claim to be treated unjustly. For the gift of his heart, see also 26.R, and among many other examples, Machaut, *Lou*. 110.16, 274.20; Deschamps 437.26-28, 664; Granson 8.3. The claim of unfairness is almost as common, but it is usually phrased either as poor payment for the persona's long service, as in Granson 11.15-20, or as an inappropriate punishment when he has done no wrong, as in Machaut, *Lou*. 55.8-11 and 66. Froissart combines the two motifs in Bal. 14 (in which the gift of his heart is one of several proofs of his service, lines 11-12) and in Bal. 17.21-23, "Car quant je li donne en don / Mon coer, m'amour, n'en ai pour guerredon / Fors escondis et refus jour et nuit [for when I give her as a gift my heart, my love, I have no reward but refusal and rejection day and night]." The closest to these lines, however, may be the passage in *CA* (5.4485-4532) cited by Macaulay, Amans' confession of "Usure," in which he suggests, with cautious self-interest, that his lady might be guilty of the sin in question: "Sche hath mi love, and I have noght / Of that I have diere boght, / And with myn herte I have it paid," he says (5.4509-11), and he prays

- to God to send her grace to amend. "Sche mai be such, that hir o lok / Is worth thin herte manyfold," Genius tells him in reply (5.4542-43).
- 10 *compulsion*. "Forsfaiture" has two general senses, which proceed from the two different uses of the underlying verb "forfaire": "to commit a fault" (*DMF* s.v. "forfaire," A), hence "offense," "sin," or even "infidelity" (*DMF* s.v. "forfaiture," A); or "to forfeit, as to a confiscation or penalty" (*DMV* s.v. "forfaire," B), hence "compulsory confiscation" (*DMF* s.v. "forfaiture," B). Both seem to come into play here, though in the context of exchanges, the latter is perhaps dominant.
- 13 *form*. "Feture" (from "faire [to make or create]") might be "form," "appearance," or in the plural, "features"; *DMF* s.v. "faiture," A.2.a. Cf. Machaut, *Chans.Bal.* 3.25, "vo noble faiture."
- 14 *if I set myself*. For "convoyer," the dictionaries give "accompany, escort, lead" (see the notes to 8.20 and 9.14), but they don't provide any examples of a reflexive use similar to Gower's in this line. Gower uses the reflexive form four times in *MO*. The most helpful is in 8166, "Q'au droit port se puet convoier [that can lead or guide itself to the right port]." "Set myself" is my inference from context.
- 17-18 The lover's claim that his lady's behavior towards him is inconsistent with her otherwise good character is not as common in earlier lyrics as one might suppose. For one example, see Machaut, *Lou.* 150.1-3: "Eimmi! dame, coment puet endurer / Vos gentilz cuers, qi tant ha de valour, / Que je me muir einssi pour vous amer? [Alas, lady, how can your gentle heart, which has so much worth, endure that I die this way for loving you]." Gower uses a similar motif in 28.1-4, 8-10 and by implication in the refrain to 11..
- 17 *For*. "Pour" introduces the infinitive which is the subject of "accorde." This is not a common structure, but it is not unlike Gower's use elsewhere of "pour" where in English he would use "for to" (see the note to 11.5). For one similar Anglo-Norman example, from the 12th-century *Romance of Horn*, see *AND* s.v. "pur²," 2: "pur sei bien covrir est sage e veziee [to cover oneself well is wise and cunning]." *look*. This use of "mirer" (here and in 22.17 and 26.18) is evidently Anglo-Norman. See *AND* s.v. "mirer¹," v.a., 1. *DMF* s.v. "mirer¹" lists only the reflexive use, "se mirer," "to reflect" or "to see reflected" (as in a mirror). It appears that from phrases like "C'est comme mirour dont je me mir [it's like a mirror in which I see myself reflected]" (*MO* 21702), "mirer" was extended to other objects as well with the more general meaning of "to see" and then to the intransitive use, as in this line, "to look."
- 18 *character*. On the possible ways of translating "mesure" see the note to 7.17.
- 19 *disdain*. Lost in the translation is the repetition of "danger," fully personified in the refrain but here, referring to the quality of the lady's "look," floating between a personification and an abstraction.
- 21 *Moustreetz*. Lower-case *u* and *n* are often hard to distinguish, but here the letter in question appears to be a *u*. The verb is commonly spelled both ways (see *AND* s.v. "mustrer"), and in its two other appearances in *50B* (23.27 and 32.17), it appears to be spelled with an *n* and is so transcribed by Macaulay. In the same manuscript, *Tr* 6.R, "demo[]stre" and 17.16, "mo[]stre" also appear to be spelled with an *n*, but Macaulay transcribes both with a *u*. In his edition of *MO*, Macaulay consistently uses a *u* with only one exception, in line 17883. To add to the confusion, see 25.4, where what appears in the MS to be "mout" can only by "m'ont." *in its visible form*, i.e., as explained in the next line. *DMF* s.v. "figure," A.1.
- 22 *sweet, bright, laughing*. "Bright, sparkling" is the usual translation for "vair" with reference to the eyes. See *AND* s.v. "vair¹," 2; and *DMF* s.v. "vair," I.B. "Dous," "vair," and "riant" often occur together in the description of the lady's eyes. *AND* s.v. "vair" cites *Horn* 1256: "Oilz veirs, gros, duz, rians." For Machaut, see the passages listed in *DMF*, loc.cit. See also 27.1 and *MO* 925, "oels vairs riantz," with reference to "Leccherie."

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- 25 *without impropriety*. "Sanz mesprisure" is one of the formulaic expressions by which the persona assures his lady of his honest intentions in the lyrics. See the note to 21.8 and *DMF* s.v. "méprisure," A, with five citations from Machaut.
- 27 Since "complaigns" can be transitive or intransitive, "Q[e]" here might be "that" or "for," but it is difficult to see that it makes any difference.